

# Live Births per 1,000 Females

<u>Age of Mother</u>	<u>N.C. 1980</u>	<u>N.C. 1990 Projected</u>	<u>U.S. 1990 Goal</u>
Under 15	1.6	virtually zero	virtually zero
15	17.6	13.2	10.0
16	38.1	31.2	25.0
17	59.5	53.0	45.0

In addition to the above, North Carolina's health community must be concerned about the number of repeat pregnancies among teenagers, particularly unmarried mothers under age 18. In 1981, a total of 570 unmarried females under 18 experienced a second or higher-order live birth or fetal death. Those events are included in a list of "sentinel health events" (24) identified by state health officials as being the minimum set about which the health community should ask, "Why did they happen?" In addition to those pregnancies, repeat abortions are a matter of concern with one out of four or 8,200 abortees during 1981 reporting at least one previous procedure and 368 reporting at least three. Among those repeaters were 1,452 teenagers.

In both the state and the nation, the number and percentage of live births out of wedlock rose steadily during the last decade. The N.C. 1981 percentages were 6.5 for whites and 46.4 for nonwhites with the number of births out of wedlock totaling 16,210. The U.S. percentages were 11.0 for whites and 48.4 for nonwhites in 1980 (25).

In North Carolina, the increase in births out of wedlock appears entirely due to growth in the number of unmarried women of childbearing age. The rate of childbearing by unmarried women actually dropped during the decade, by 5.6 percent to 10.1 for whites and by 20.7 percent to 65.2 for nonwhites in 1980. These changes compare to an overall 32 percent decline in the number of births per 1,000 women ages 15-44.

Notable changes in the percentage distributions of North Carolina births also include reduced percentages of mothers with other maternal risk factors, i.e., young and old age, low educational attainment, high parity and previous loss of a liveborn infant. Still, in 1981, one of every two live births involved at least one of the maternal characteristics associated with high infant mortality. Those events represented 43 percent of white births and 72 percent of nonwhite births. (Note: See table on page 3-10 for identification of the eight maternal characteristics.)

Between 1970 and 1980, the North Carolina percentage of live births 2,500 grams or less declined about 1.4 percent per year to 7.9; the nonwhite decrease was about 1.6 percent annually to 11.8. Still, only 7 states experienced higher percentages than N.C.'s in 1980 (25).